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Mrs. Mesdag and her husband became interested in the art of the French school when they went to Paris in 1867 to visit the great International Exhibition. The impression made upon them at that time was the genesis of the now famous Mesdag museum at The Hague. One after another, examples of the work of the great painters were purchased, and the Mesdag Gallery, which was lately given to the city for the benefit of its people, was formed. A notice like this of the life work of Mrs. Mesdag, who is adequately represented in many of the great galleries of Europe, would not be complete without giving her full credit for the part she took in the creation of this wonderful gallery of pictures, and of its bestowal upon the Dutch people.

BROES VAN RYN.



JUST LEMONS

By Mrs. S. Mesdag van Houten

## NOTES ON THE ART EXHIBIT OF HOLLAND

The Holland painters are as keen in the study of landscape as in rendering upon canvas the quiet lives and homely surroundings of the people. Here again they do not look for the unusual, either in composition or color. They do not choose for subjects such as must seem untrue to that majority which is not trained to perceive extreme effects in nature, but rather they paint the landscape—and the seascape—in the “ordinary, every-day dress,” which we all know and can understand.

Only one thing it is necessary to remember in order to appreciate the Dutch landscapes—the normal atmosphere of the low-lying country is very heavy with moisture, the painting of which infuses a gray tone into the skies and a low color-key into the general prospect. It is not a good thing to base the impressions to be formed in the

Holland section wholly upon the work of the men who are international characters in art, as Josef Israels, Jacob Maris, and H. W. Mesdag are so well known that one runs the risk of thinking only those things of them which have often been said or written time and time again.

As to landscape, however, in Jacob Maris is the beginning of any series of ideas. Two fine things by him were in the loan collection of the American section. One in particular, lent by Mr. Charles Parsons, "View of Amsterdam," includes a phase of the great Holland painter which was not to be found in the Holland section. Its theme chiefly is a low bridge of concrete arching a canal. The harmonies of its line and its color and the depth and richness of the latter cannot be told in words. His three things in the Holland section included another "View of Amsterdam," one from the shipping front, and two smaller pictures, "The River" and "In the Dunes." The latter was the most interesting. In them was found his inimitable "wet" sky. The clouds seemed to be veritably laden with tons of water. Yet it is not the black, tempestuous sky with which the Americans of the West are unpleasantly familiar. It is that damp gray mantle in disarray, which overreaching the heavens, promises the light, but steady, downfall that is the salvation of the farmer. His composition is beautifully simple, never cluttered up in the foreground, and retreating toward the horizon in an even progress. He grasps the bigger phases of nature and impresses them upon you directly and forcefully.

Maris is now four years dead, and the interesting point arises whether the present drift of Dutch landscape-painting lies in imitation of him. The relationship of Maris with the various present-day Dutch painters, young and old, seems very strong, and gives ground for the general criticism of monotony that was advanced with reference to the Dutch section. However, there is one thing about following in the beaten path; it does not lead to the tomfool kind of individuality.

But more than one safe individual note appeared in the Dutch section. Bernard Schregel is a young painter of twenty-five years, and he had a canvas which had nothing of Maris or the usual Dutch in it, but which avoided a borrowed or the French manner. It was of Holland, but not of a "school." The painter had dared a good deal and successfully.

Any one who observes will remember that often of evenings after rain, and when the last gusts of wind are still hurrying by, the western sky will be covered with a translucent veil of cloud. The result is a white sky and a white light, brilliant, but not dazzling. The rays are disseminated; no heavy shadows are seen, but the view is enveloped in the effulgence. In company with a wild landscape, at the center of which rises a clump of trees bent by the wind, Schregel has



# THE SKIPPER

By Josef Israëls

Exhibitor in Dutch Section, World's Fair

painted such a sky. The picture exhibited thrilled with light, and had an added touch of sentiment in the lone figure of a peasant woman who is painted upon the knoll beside the trees as if hurrying through the wind upon some evening mission.

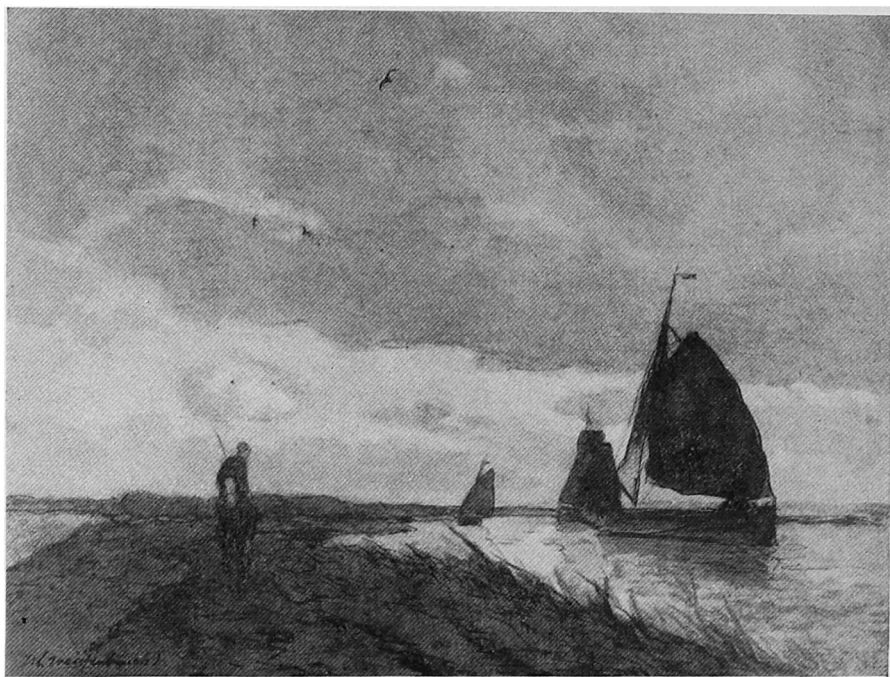
Near the Schregel picture was another less unusual, but very attractive, "The First Snow," by Louis W. van Soest. It was sunrise in a river valley. The soft and wet snowfall had but partially mantled the landscape. The sluggish current was as yet untrammelled by ice, but glimpses of it gave the steely blue suggestion of the stream in winter. The sky, too, was cold; the sun's rays breaking upon the frosty mist were tempered to frigid pinks and blues. It was a sky familiar to few, and that few chiefly those energetic duck-hunters or fishermen who are upon the water before sunrise in the late fall. To such its truth forcibly appealed.

The trouble with Dutch *genre* pictures is that they always are the "same old thing." A peasant mother and child, a housewife sewing, some family scene in an humble home, the fireside, and so on—themes which may be classed with the eminently respectable in art. Certainly, paintings of the kind must bear the general accusation of dullness for persons whose complicated existence nurtures the con-

stant want of a new sensation, be it in sculpture, painting, music, or the drama. The Dutch paint the home, the simple, healthy lives of simple people with deep feeling and unequalled skill. This has been true, of course, for many years. The sane and sober strain of their art endeavor has been preserved undefiled.

In this fact, probably, lies the explanation of the importance of painting in Holland. The artists devote themselves to subjects intimately related with the lives of the people, and the people, without the necessity of meeting with them on the technical plane, can understand and appreciate the artists. In the United States the artists are a small clique unto themselves, constantly berating the ignorance of the people, while the people are superlatively indifferent to the artists.

However, were these *genres* exhibited dull? It seemed so at first. But, after one had walked in the art galleries and seen, say, five thousand pictures, like the Prodigal on his return, one was glad to get back to the "same old thing." Their sentiment was so pure. No difficulty to understand them. They meant so little, and yet so much. They were so restful. They told us how much better it would be to live quietly and peacefully than to rack brain and body



THE "SPAARNE"

By Johannes Hendrick Weissenbruch

Exhibitor in Dutch Section, World's Fair

with a mile-a-minute pace. Though we might entertain no serious intention of taking to a cottage and courting rural bliss, it was no harm to contemplate the advantages of such a course.

And in artistic quality—should we be these unfortunates in whom a little learning demands certain proficiencies in “drawing,” “color,” etc.—the Dutch paintings were uniformly satisfying. In their famous men and their younger artists, unknown to us in America, they discover a wonderful skill. Their standard is not an individual affair, but general. With two or three obvious exceptions, it was a difficult thing to find an absolutely bad picture in the Dutch section, a feat which can be performed with great ease in the American, French, or German division.

In “Laren Interior,” by Hendrik F. de Court Onderwarter, a canvas hung in the central Holland gallery, was one of these attractive studies, *genre* in character. It was the home of a peasant family, very dark and quiet. A young woman was the sole figure, and she



INTERIOR NORTH BRABANT

By B. J. Blommers

Exhibitor in Dutch Section, World's Fair



A CALM NIGHT

By Hendrik Willem Mesdag

Exhibitor in Dutch Section, World's Fair

was engaged in the very domestic occupation of filling a water-vessel. A brown tone characterized the whole canvas, but a brown which had a remarkable depth and richness. Very little light was in the room, but, despite the low key, the artist painted a splendid transparency into the shadows. Cutting out the picture from its surroundings by circling your eyes with your hands, you saw how real the thing was. You felt that you could step across the frame into the Dutch cottage. You were translated into a foreign country and atmosphere.

Another thing which remains in mind was by Leonard de Hoog, also a comparatively young man, whose art education is grounded in Dutch traditions, both as to the manner and the object of his painting. It is "Maternal Joy." Again, it was an interior, characterized by more light, however. The mother, with her babe, was sitting beside a window, and the faces of both were in sharp relief. The subject was well chosen. The expression of the mother conveyed her conviction that this child was quite the only one on earth. The only way to compliment this woman would be to compliment the child, whereupon, undoubtedly, you would at once be admitted to her good graces. And the child! One of those chubby-cheeked

little ones, whose eyes are full of an excessive amiability and whose mouth is constantly pursed for a laugh. The baby was holding a doll and was regarding that bedraggled object with unmixed delight. Here was realism which is universally real; not realism which goes on the principle that the real is disagreeable. As a picture, in its color particularly, one needs no superlatives in the description. As for that baby, a constitutional baby-hater would be moved to affectionate admiration, for babies are blessedly silent in pictures.

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## NOTES FROM THE ART MUSEUMS

Some of the recent acquisitions to the collection of the National Museum in London include Van Dyck's "Charles I." (£17,500), Holbein's "Ambassadors," Velasquez's "Admoral Pulido-Pareja," and Morini's "Italian Nobleman," from Longford Castle, which together cost £55,000, £30,000 of which was derived from private gifts, and Rembrandt's portrait of "A Burgomaster" and "Portrait of an Old Lady," acquired from Lord de Saumarez for £15,050. For the Peel collection, comprising seventy-seven pictures and eighteen drawings, £75,000 was paid. An interesting offer of a quarter of a million sterling was once made for the Peel pictures.

✱ An event of importance to lovers of art is the exhibition of the paintings and studies by the late Robert Frederick Blum at the Cincinnati Museum, which will continue to Feb. 5th. The exhibition includes one hundred and fifty-two members, and displays the versatility of a fellow-townsmen who ranked among the foremost painters in this country. In the exhibition are paintings, drawings in color and pencil, many of them famous to lovers of art. The exhibition was arranged for by William J. Baer, administrator of the estate, through the permission of Mrs. Henrietta Haller, sister of the deceased artist. Of the paintings and studies exhibited there will be preserved a representative collection to remain in the museum of the native city of the artist. Some have already been agreed on and others are under consideration.

✱ Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, has been provided with a public art gallery, the gift of Alexander Laing. It cost \$150,000. A collection of paintings by British artists will be one of the prominent features.

✱ Among the old paintings recently added to the Berlin museums is a "Christ Appearing to Magdalen," by Bartolomeo Montagna. John the Baptist and St. Jerome are in niches in the architectural background to the right and left.